THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) It is a fact that over Rs. 1000 crores have been blocked in Iraq representing dues payable by Iraqi companies' banks for project exports executed by Indian contractors in Iraq.

(b) and (c) These above loans were being serviced out of payments received through import of oil from Iraq, under the Deferred Payment Arrangements between Governments of India and Iraq. With the onset of Gulf crisis and imposition of UN trade embargo, import of crude oil could not be effected and no payments have therefore been relised under the Deferred Payment Arrangements, since August, 1990. Government took up the matter with the UN Security Council Committee about the possibility of Iraq providing oil to India in lieu of money owed to Indian construction companies in January, 1991. However, response of UN Security Council Committee had not been favourable. Arrangements for realisation of further payments from Iraq can, therefore, be worked out only after lifting of UN trade embargo on Iraq.

Indo-Myanmar Trade

*277. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to undertake border trade with Myanmar; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Conference on Standardisation and Quality Upgradation of a Substitute for Timber

*278. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bureau of Indian Standards recently organised a conference on standardisation and quality upgradation of a substitute for timber; and

(b) if so, what is the outcome of the said conference?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The Bureau of Indian Standards organised tre National Conference on Standardization and Quality Upgradation of Lignocellulosic Panel Products (LPP) on 29-30 December, 1992 at New Dehi. These products are one of the several possible substitutes for conventional timber.

The purpose of this Conference was to consider standardisation and quality aspects pertaining to application, development and potential use of lignocellulosic panel products as substitute for conventional timber. The term 'lignocellulosic' applies to the products manufactured out of wood or agro based fibrous materials including wood and agro wastes. Examples of lignoceusic panel products are particle boards, fibre boards, block boards and plywood.

The major recommendations of this Conference include the following :—

(i) promotion of the use of lignocellulsic pane products (LPP) as alternative to solid wood for all relevant construction activities;